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ABSTRACT

The value of foreign language education at the elementary school level for Australia is discussed from two perspectives: its contribution to tolerance of cultural diversity within Australian society and its contribution to Australia's role in the global society. Reference is made to a variety of studies and commission reports. First, the relationship between language and human rights in general is examined, including recent Australian legislative and organizational initiatives and the principles underlying a recently-developed universal declaration of language rights. The role of civics education in a culturally diverse society is also considered. International relations and international trade are then discussed, and it is concluded that if Australia and Australians are to enjoy equity as they compete for world markets, it is essential that many more people attain high skill levels in a variety of languages and better use be made of existing skills in the community. Implications for determining language priorities, establishing policy concerning cultural diversity, fostering favorable cultural attitudes, providing quality instruction, meeting business and industry needs, and promoting community awareness are outlined. Contains 21 references. (MSE)

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LANGUAGES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION: TOWARDS EQUITY FOR AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIANS

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LANGUAGES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION: TOWARDS EQUITY FOR AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIANS

D. E. INGRAM

I INTRODUCTION

Australia has progressed dramatically in its attitudes to the cultural diversity of its people. The present writer spent his childhood at a time in the 1940s and 1950s when to be Australian was to be British, white and English-speaking and, even if others were not to be denigrated, they were at least to be pitied. Today we espouse a multicultural, multilingual society in which all people are regarded as equal and in which we respect the cultures, ethnic origins and racial equality of all persons. That is, we believe Australians espouse such values unless we happen to be an eleven year old Australian boy with a Papuan mother and a skin permanently the soft tan that "white Australians" seek during their beach holidays. For that boy, it is a daily experience to be told (with the invective softened for this paper):

> *Hey you black Abo...your skin's brown like poo!*

Or at the class's folkdance session:

> *She won't want to dance with a black nigger.*

Or on the soccerfield:

> *Move your black backside!*

After a school excursion, he wrote:

> *Brett and Justin squashed me in the bus. Brett said he was punishing me for being black.*

On another occasion he wrote:

> *He said, "Don't you laugh! You probably dirtied your pants a hundred times...That must be why you're brown."*
>
> *I was so cold my hands went white and pink. Phil said, "Look, his hands went pink."*
>
> *Peter said, "Looks like a colourful ice cream from Papua New Guinea."*

And as a final example out of the many:

> *We were talking about the movie* White Men Can't Jump. *Ben said, "I'm white. I can jump." So did Nathan.*
>
> *Ben said to me, pointing his finger, "You're black! No blacks allowed in this country."*
>
> *I took no notice. Do not comment.*

If a mixed-race child who is good at sport, excellent at school, quite musical, and from an educationally and financially privileged sector of society has that experience, not occasionally but almost on a daily basis, how much more awful, destructive and demeaning must be the experience of many Aboriginal or migrant children who cannot afford to go to school well dressed, who don't have the opportunity to develop the sort of sporting, musical and general educational skills that we value in the society, or who speak English with difficulty in a strong non-Australian accent. What is even more frightening is that the boy referred to is popular, and most of the times there is little doubt that the other boys who spoke to him in the ways cited were not consciously racist; rather, what they said was, to them, natural, sometimes jocular, and reflected the sorts of cross-cultural and inter-racial attitudes that they learned from their homes to be "normal".

The boys' attitudes reflected in their words may be unintentional in their racist denigration but they are no less hurtful and personally damaging for all that, as the boy's writing them to his father and asking him not to comment indicate. Australia professes to be an accepting multicultural society in which we hold high principles of equity but if you live at the interstices of that equal society, you realise that the forms don't match the reality, the policies and their implementation are often very different, and, as a nation, we have an obligation to bring the high ideals of policy and their day-to-day realisation much closer together.

The principal tool outside of law and litigation that a society has available to it by which to effect attitude change and by which to entrench the principles of equity is education, there is evidence that language education is the component of the education system that may most effectively and favourably influence inter-cultural attitudes, but it is also essential that such intervention occur before attitudes become fixed in adolescence [see Ingram 1979, 1978; Morgan 1993]. For this reason (amongst others, of course), the introduction and expansion of language teaching in the Primary School is of the utmost importance if we are to move towards a more equitable and harmonious society since, no matter what the law says, equity can exist only if the attitudes of the people allow it to exist.

This paper will briefly address the notion of equity in language teaching from two principal directions: equity in human rights for individuals in relation to other members of Australian society and equity for Australia in relation to the rest of the world.

II LANGUAGE AND EQUITY IN HUMAN RIGHTS

II.1 Language and Culture Rights: In recent years, Australia has moved considerably towards formalising human rights of all sorts in legislation at the national and State/Territory levels and through the endorsement of international conventions. One of the earliest of these affirmations in relation to language and culture was in the Galbally Review accepted as policy by the then Australian Government in 1978:

> *...every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures.* [Review of Post-arrival Programs and Services for Migrants 1978: 4]

More recently, the Queensland Electoral and Administrative Review Commission (EARC) was asked to advise on a Bill of Rights for Queensland aimed at "preserving and enhancing" individuals' rights and freedoms. One section specifically addressed

> *...the right of all persons, including minority groups, to have access to culture, arts, sciences and languages other than those of the majority, and the right to express their culture and arts, to enjoy the benefits of sciences and use their language without fear of favour or prejudice.* [Queensland Electoral and Administrative Review Commission 1993: 372]

The Commission's report reviewed the evidence put before it (including oral and written submissions from the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations), noted various international conventions, and observed that the right to culture and language was given "considerable authority" by Article 27 of the *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights* which provides that ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities *shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture...or to use their own language* [EARC 1993: 374]. The Commission concluded its section on language and culture rights by recommending in the following terms:

> *Right to culture*
>
> *42. (1) All persons have the collective and individual right of reasonable access to all culture, arts, sciences and languages.*
>
> *2. All persons have the collective and individual right, without fear of prejudice, to freely...*
>
> *(a) express their culture and arts;*
> *(b) enjoy the benefits of the sciences; [and]*
> *(c) use their language.* [EARC 1993: 375]

Rights of language and culture are essential, indeed pre-requisite to other human rights in a society since, without the right to identify with the language and culture of their choice, a person's other rights rapidly become meaningless. EARC quotes the oral submission from the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (AFMLTA) which asserted that everyone should have the right to their own language and culture and to have that right respected. The AFMLTA submission, as noted by EARC, stated:

> *...language is an integral part of an individual's identity...If you destroy the language and the culture...you destroy an essential part of an individual and greatly inhibit his or her capacity to operate successfully in the society...*
>
> *...we must recognise that individuals have the right to their own language, culture, their own ethnicity, their own race, and to have that right respected...they should have the right in a diverse society to be able to exist, to take pride in their language, their culture, their ethnicity, and to not have to endure gratuitous abuse on the basis of those personal features.* [EARC 1993: 372]

However, an individual's or a group's rights exist only insofar as the rest of a society allow them to exist: they cannot exist where individuals who differ from the group around them in ethnicity, race, language or culture are personally and continually attacked (deliberately or unwittingly) and have their identity denigrated. In other words, any defensible concept of equity in a society has also to address the issue of how the society can best ensure that its members hold cross-cultural or inter-cultural attitudes that both respect the rights of others to be different and value those differences. The language education system has an integral part to play in this since it, of all the elements of the education curriculum, is best suited to addressing and enhancing cross-cultural attitudes and inter-cultural understanding. One of the best statements of this point of view is contained in the 1992 report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs [1992], *Language and Culture - A Matter of Survival*. In that report and in the parliamentary debate when it was tabled, it was strongly stated that languages are not only a system of words and grammars but are the means of group identification, that they carry much of the culture, the world view and the values of the people, that the death of a language is a serious attack on the people themselves, and that the learning of Aboriginal languages by other Australians not only will help to preserve those languages but will do much to help other Australians to understand Aboriginal people and their culture and to understand what is required of Aboriginal people in trying to accommodate to the demands of white, English-speaking Australians.

II.2 Universal Declaration of Language Rights: For several years, the World Federation of Modern Language Teachers (FIPLV) has been developing a universal declaration of language rights to be endorsed, it is hoped, by UNESCO. That declaration is in the final stages of development prior to publication but, in a recent form, it stated in part:

> *1. Every person has the right to acquire his or her mother tongue.*
>
> *2. Every person has the right to acquire the official language or languages of the country in which he or she receives his or her education...*
>
> *4. Every person has the right to learn any one or more languages.*
>
> *5. Every person has the right of access to any language...*
>
> *7. Every person has the right to identify with any language and to have that choice respected...*
>
> *10. Every person has the right to be taught at least one additional language so as to extend his or her social, cultural, educational and intellectual horizons and to promote genuine understanding between nations.* [From draft articles proposed by FIPLV for inclusion in *A Universal Charter of Basic Human Language Rights*]

In another version of this Declaration, another important clause appeared:

> *Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, to a level which ensures that he or she can communicate fluently and accurately, orally and in writing, in each of the languages specified...*

If this charter were adopted, it would recognise the rights of all persons to acquire additional languages but it is particularly important to note the implication of Clause 10 that people have the right to be educated out of narrow chauvinistic attitudes and that language learning is an important means of achieving this. In other words, education policies that allow monolingualism to persist or limit language education to short dripfeed programmes which effectively preclude the attainment of useful levels of proficiency and cultural understanding entrench ethnocentrism, and probably racism, and are themselves discriminatory. In other words, if Australian children are to enjoy equity with their peers in other countries, they need to start language learning sufficiently early and pursue it sufficiently long that they attain useful levels of proficiency, and they need to experience the language and culture in situations that can effectively contribute to enhanced cultural understanding and favourable attitude development. In addition, if education policies are to widen horizons, improve inter-cultural attitudes and reduce chauvinism, they must provide the necessary experiences (specifically, good language learning) at an age when cross-cultural attitudes are still sufficiently malleable. Again, the implications for the teaching of languages in the Primary School are obvious as is the need to so design curricula and methods that they do develop cultural understanding and do effect favourable cross-cultural attitude change.

III CIVICS EDUCATION

As Australia approaches the centenary of federation, increasing attention is being given to what it is to be Australian, and what the national icons (its head of state, flag and other symbols) should be. In that context, the Prime Minister recently established a high level committee to advise on the development of a syllabus for civics education. The concept of civics education in a culturally and linguistically diverse society set in a culturally, linguistically and politically diverse world region is very relevant to the issues that concern language teachers, especially at Primary School level. They are especially relevant to the attitudinal issues that have been a focus of this paper. In particular, the following issues seem to warrant consideration[1]:

1. If the study of civics relates to developing in students an understanding of the political and civic structures of the society and how individual human rights are realised through these structures, then, as already noted, any discussion of human rights, equity and the social and political structures to realise them is meaningless unless the population at large recognises and accepts that all people have rights, that all people are intrinsically equal in their rights and in the respect due to them, that rights of ethnicity, race, language and culture are sacrosanct and that, without such attitudes, laws and political structures cannot provide equity. The implications of this must be taken into account in the design of civics education courses and civics education should be seen, not just as a discrete subject in itself, but as something whose goals are served through various elements of the curriculum, not least through language education. Indeed, it is appropriately designed language education which most effectively fosters attitudes appropriate to social diversity. In addition, a language education programme that is integrated with a broad culture learning programme can introduce children at first hand to different social and political structures and, as they learn the language and culture, they can see the different structures, in a sense, from within them rather than from within their own first culture seeing the other system as if it were a museum curio.

2. Any attempt to define what it means to be an Australian and therefore the education system that serves Australians must work from the basic assumption of linguistic, ethnic and racial diversity and recognise all elements of that diversity irrespective of the time of migration to this country. This means that all Australian languages and cultures have a right to exist and to be recognised in the education system even though resource limitations will necessarily require that formal service provisions such as education have to establish priorities at the same time as they accept and support diversity. This recognition also entails accepting the rights of all groups to maintain and identify with their language, religion and culture and, where and when

[1] Most of these issues were initially canvassed in the AFMLTA's submission of 6 September 1994 to the Civics Expert Group established by the Australian Prime Minister to advise on the development of a national curriculum in civics. Thanks are owed to Heather Goodenough and Angela Scarino who assisted the present writer in preparing that submission.

appropriate, to use icons that support their identification with their heritage, even while sharing with other Australians a commitment to Australia and their identification with other Australians.

3. As the world shrinks as a result of developments in communications and travel, it is essential that Australians be able to see their political and social system in the context of other systems that exist, especially in their neighbourhood, to understand how they interact and co-exist, to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their own system, and to come to perceive how their own system may benefit by learning from other systems. In addition, learning about others helps to define ourselves and, if civics education is about defining what it is to be Australian, what the distinguishing features of Australia, its people and its systems are, then an important aspect of civics education should be learning about other systems or, as already stated, learning to see the Australian system within the context of the political and social systems that exist around the world but, more particularly, within our world region [cf. Kramsch 1993]. Without elaborating on this and granted the issues already discussed, this notion emphasises the need for the language education system to include the major world and regional languages and cultures as well as the languages and cultures of the Australian community.

4. The issues emanating from an acceptance of cultural and linguistic diversity as one of the features that characterise Australia and Australians also has implications for services beyond education and for how the attendant rights might be formalised. At the very least, civics education has to consider these issues and the arguments for and against, for example, language rights including such rights as the right of individuals to access services in the language of their choice, the right of citizens to receive government information and services in their own language, and, when practical issues resulting from resource limitations prevent direct access through their language, their right of access to a competent interpreter or translator. The last of these issues suggests, for example, that a linguistically diverse society should make available a readily accessible telephone interpreter service comparable to that provided by AT&T Language Line Services in the United States. Language Line makes an interpreter available to any person, service agency or business enterprise at the cost and inconvenience of a telephone call, from anywhere in the country (or in the world for that matter) and in, at present, more than 140 languages. The Telephone Interpreter Service in Australia has the potential to provide a comparable service but it would need to be expanded, its accessibility by all persons greatly increased, and the general and specific skills and diversity of its interpreters assured. In the United States, access to Language Line is increasingly being seen as a right or, at least, as an essential service if the principles of equity and the equal rights of all citizens are to be preserved. In recent years, for example, major hospitals in the United States have been obliged (in some cases as a result of action by State and Federal Offices of Civil Rights) to make Language Line readily available to patients and staff. At the least, civics education needs to draw out the corollaries of linguistic diversity so that students consider not only the

policy ideals but what their practical implementation requires within the structures and services of the community.

5. In recognising and accepting linguistic and cultural diversity, it is easy to fall into the trap of believing that all elements of all cultures are equally valuable but, in fact, basic human values underlie different cultures and provide a means of evaluating them. In addition, it is probably the particular selection of those values and our prioritizing of them that distinguishes one nation from another and that identifies the uniting elements within the diverse concept of an "Australian". In other words, in civics education, whether that be in a discrete course or across the curriculum and including language education, respect for other cultures and for Australian culture necessitates also consideration of the limits of freedom and acceptability. The danger of this is that cultural myopia will lead teachers and students into false judgements and this is why language education which enables cultural features to be evaluated from within the culture and its systematicity rather than from outside as discrete museum objects is so important within a broad concept of civics education. However, without some evaluative component, there is danger that the underlying human values will be ignored, Australian culture in its diversity and distinctiveness will be undervalued, and the outcome for the learners may be a disintegration of their value system, some form of cultural anomie, or the total rejection of other cultures. The difficulty, again, in all this is to avoid monocultural prejudice on the one hand and a value-less and unthinking cultural acceptance on the other.

6. What is clear from this discussion is that civics education is not just about the presentation of a set of objective facts about the nature of the political system, the constitution and forms of government. It is much more diverse, touches on areas of great sensitivity and delicacy, and requires well-trained teachers embued both with a thorough understanding of the Australian culture and Australian systems but also open-minded towards, and with direct experience of, other cultures and systems. It is also evident that the issues that touch on civics education cannot be dealt with in a single, monocultural course taught for a couple of hours on a Friday afternoon when everyone is too tired or disinterested to do Maths or Science or language. Civics education has to stretch across a wide range of the curriculum and certainly encompass language education.

IV EQUITY FOR AUSTRALIA IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

The discussion so far has focused principally on issues of equity as they relate to human rights but equity issues are also relevant to Australia and Australians in the context of international relations and, not least, international trade. The present writer has discussed at length elsewhere the role of languages in furthering international trade [e.g., Ingram, in preparation; Ingram 1991; Stanley, Ingram and Chittick 1990] and those general issues will not be addressed in detail here. It is sufficient to note that the better exporters understand the people to whom they are trying to sell, the better

their products match the needs of their customers, and the more effectively they can communicate with them, the more likely it is that the customers will buy. National and State language policies, recent trade reports such as those reviewed in *Speaking of Business* over the last seven years, studies of successful exporters such as those reported in Stanley *et al* [1990], and the so-called COAG Report [COAG 1994], all emphasize the link between language skills and cultural understanding, on the one hand, and export success, on the other. In fact, the COAG Report states that its focus is specifically on *Asian languages/cultures education as a means of enhancing Australia's economic and export interests* [COAG 1994: ii].

Though the justification for language learning goes much beyond mere economic rationalist arguments to include general educational, intellectual and cultural reasons, if the economic purposes are to be achieved and if Australia and Australians are to compete for world markets without inhibitions imposed by linguistic and cultural limitations, several issues with implications for Primary School language education warrant consideration:

First, if businesspeople are to deal effectively with other countries, they need both to understand the people with whom they are dealing and their culture and to understand their own, to realise the identity they are projecting and, if necessary (as it usually is), to learn to modify the image they project. It is only when they can identify and contrast the features of the two cultures and the different modes of operating that they are likely to be fully effective. In achieving this, language learning has a major role to play and the experience of learning a language at any age should lead one to understand the other culture and people, to recognize what is distinctive about one's own, and to realise what is or is not appropriate and may need modification in order to achieve maximum business success in the other country. One has at least to wonder whether some of the confidence of the Australian business leaders interviewed in the book *Speaking of Business* [Australian Language and Literacy Council 1994] that English was sufficient for international trade may have been the result of their monocultural failure to perceive the actual differences that exist. Kramsch discusses this aspect of language learning in the context of training American businesspeople to deal more effectively with their foreign counterparts. She notes that learning a language and learning to interact with other people leads one to better understand one's own identity, culture, and systems. She says:

> *Teaching language as social practice means linking linguistic forms and social meanings...learners must be willing to see the world from another perspective. Furthermore, learning a foreign language or going abroad is the first time that many American students are confronted with their "Americanness"...Through the image they project to speakers of other languages and through those speakers' reactions, students may realize how American their own perspective is. Understanding one's place in the world starts with understanding one's uses of language...*

> *...As American students learn to understand rather than to judge, other peoples' ways of viewing the world, they can better appreciate their own perspective in its global, historical, and social context and accept that perspective as one among many possible expressions of modern society.* [Kramsch 1993: 8 - 9]

Second, what surveys there are of the actual needs of business and industry for language skills [e.g., Ingram, in preparation; Stanley *et al* 1990; Australian Language and Literacy Council 1990, especially Appendix 3] tend to show that quite high levels of proficiency are required and an examination of proficiency scales would suggest that proficiency levels at least equivalent to ASLPR 3 are generally desirable though considerably higher levels are required for such demanding activities as negotiating a trade agreement. Though some activities (e.g., general social interaction) may be able to get by with slightly lower proficiency levels, these requirements are not being met by the language teaching system that has operated throughout most of Australia's history, not least because Secondary School is too late to enable such proficiency levels (and their comparable levels of cultural knowledge) to be achieved without a dramatic increase in the intensity of courses. Since such an increase in the intensity of courses is unlikely to be achieved, the extension of language learning into the Primary School in order to allow more children to learn languages for longer is essential. In addition, however, there is good evidence that language learning at the younger age can be both more informal, hence more diverse in the sort of language and culture experiences that the children can have, and more effective in fostering cultural understanding and favourable cross-cultural attitudes in the pre-adolescence period when attitudes seem to be more malleable.

Third, surveys such as those in Stanley *et al* [1990] in which some 2,500 middle-sized exporters were surveyed show that the fundamental deficiency in Australian industry is the lack of an export culture and an excessive orientation by industry towards the domestic market. In other words, if Australia is to compete successfully on the world market, the most fundamental requirement is that its industry and business become more outward-looking; of fundamental importance in this is the education of people who naturally think in global terms and who have both the mental orientation, the openness to other cultures, and the skills to interact with people of different cultures and languages without fear and without causing or feeling offence where that cause arises from cultural differences. This re-orientation of the Australian people and of future generations of leaders and staff for business and industry is more likely to occur if they experience other cultures and if they have frequent opportunities in the course of their education to learn that they can successfully interact with people from other cultures speaking other languages. In other words, long-term language learning (necessarily starting in Primary School) in which the learners attain significant proficiency levels in courses that develop practical language skills and involve the learners in interaction with native speakers or their surrogates is fundamental in achieving through education the re-orientation of the Australian business community that is pre-requisite to the creation of an export culture.

Fourth, the immigration programme has resulted in large numbers of people who speak a language other than English being available to provide their language skills and cultural knowledge to serve Australian industry. However, skills that have not been acquired through the formal education system tend not to be valued. Thus, for instance, a child who has studied a language at school and who has achieved possibly ASLPR 1+ to 2 in the four macroskills by Year 12 has that achievement measured, certified and recognized for entry to further education or for vocational purposes whereas, for the most part, people who have acquired much higher levels of language skills by growing up in a home where the language is spoken, by travel or by attending an "ethnic school", rarely have those skills certified or recognized and, as a result, a large resource of relevant skills go unused in the community. Not only is this wasteful but it is also discriminatory and principles of equity and resource consciousness demand that means be provided by which language skills can be certified, recognized and accredited wherever and however they have been acquired.

Fifth, though it is less pertinent to Primary School language education, it is worth noting that one of the reasons why Australian industry, like its counterpart in the United States, seems insensitive to the possible contribution of language and culture skills to furthering their export drive is that they lack the knowledge and the tools by which to articulate their needs. For this reason, it is important that Australia develop sets of vocational language competencies analogous to the National Language Standards that have been developed in Britain [e.g., Languages Lead Body 1992].

Sixth, though the area of highest demand in industry is for people who are able to interact socially using the language [see Stanley *et al* 1990, Australian Language and Literacy Council 1994: Appendix 3; Ingram, in preparation], there is also need for people with specialist language skills and with facility in various specific registers of the language. For this to be achieved, there is need for a much greater variety of courses, including specific purpose and vocational language courses but, in addition, the spread of immersion and partial immersion courses in which learners necessarily are encountering and learning a much greater range of registers contributes to this end.

Seventh, language skills must be seen as important but ancillary skills in the context of vocational competencies and qualifications. Saying this in no way plays down the importance of language skills but surveys of industry demands for language skills such as those reported in Stanley *et al* 1990 and *Speaking of Business* (Appendix 3) [Australian Language and Literacy Council 1994] emphasize that industry requires potential employees to have other vocational training to which the language skills are complementary. In fact, this is fully in accord with the notion of language as a tool by which to get things done but it has profound implications for the way in which languages are taught and the expectations of those who learn them. For very few people is it appropriate to see a language as a specialist skill and the prime focus of their education but for all people the addition of language skills will enhance their other vocational skills and enhance their employability even though few would gain employment on the basis of their language skills alone [see Australian language and Literacy Council 1994: Appendix 3 and Ingram, in preparation]. Throughout their language education, therefore, learners need the opportunity to develop practically useful levels of language skills and cultural understanding, they need to extend their

language development into as many different register areas as possible, and they should, at all times, be encouraged to see the relevance of their growing language skills to the other areas of their education and training. These ends are also served by the use of immersion and partial immersion programmes and of courses that contain elements of specific purpose vocational language training (as in, for instance, those language for tourism courses offered in some Queensland schools in prime tourist areas).

In summary, if Australia and Australians are to enjoy equity as they compete for world markets, it is essential that many more people acquire high levels of language skills in a variety of different languages and that better use be made of those skills naturally occurring in the community. It is also essential that they develop attitudes that orientate them towards a world market and attitudes and skills that enable them to interact effectively with people from other cultures and, where necessary, to modify their own behaviour to make their interaction and the marketing activity in which they engage more effective.

V IMPLICATIONS

This discussion of equity in the context of life in a racially, culturally and linguistically diverse society and world has profound implications for language education and, not least, for languages in the Primary School. In the previous section, some of the implications of the role of languages in business and industry were identified. Here, a few others will be briefly summarised:

Language Priority and Diversity: If the society is to respect the rights of individuals to maintain, use and learn their own languages and cultures, the education system must be designed to allow this to occur. Yet resources of teachers and funds are necessarily finite and so societies necessarily must set priorities and identify priority languages for widespread teaching. At the same time, they must provide the means and support mechanisms whereby all individuals may have the opportunity to learn the language or languages of their choice and have that learning recognised in the same way as the learning of the priority languages is recognised. Amongst other things, this requires the following:

- the rational distribution of priority, lesser priority and other languages across the State and nation enabling learners a wide choice of languages;

- the use of teleconferencing, videoconferencing, other forms of distance education, self-access programmes and centres, ethnic and community schools, specialist language schools, and "Saturday" schools of languages by which to economically diversify available language programmes and encourage and support individual initiative;

- the formal establishment of means by which all language learning, wherever and however it has been carried out can be formally recognised, certified and accredited for all those educational and vocational purposes for which traditional in-school language learning is recognised, certified and accredited; and

- the recognition and formal certification of accredited language assessors who would be available both to certify learners' language skills for the purposes just referred to and to advise industry and institutions on their language needs, i.e. to conduct language audits and needs analyses.

Equity across Language Groups: Both issues of human rights, the diversity of the languages in the Australian community, and the diversity of the linguistic groups to which Australia seeks to export or with which it interacts globally require that the languages taught in the school system be equally diverse. Any policy, therefore, that focuses on any one language or group of languages will be deficient. Thus, in the Australian context, not just Asian languages but also the languages of Europe, the Pacific and the Americas are important. Intuitively, the COAG recommendation of a 60-40 balance between Asian and other languages would seem to be correct but if that policy or any other aimed to foster just four Asian languages to the cost of other languages it would seem likely to be short-lived.

Fostering Favourable Cross-Cultural Attitudes: Curricula and methods need to be developed that not only encourage the development of useful levels of language proficiency but also develop attitudes favourable to ethnic, cultural, linguistic and racial diversity, in other words, that foster favourable cross-cultural attitudes. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the present writer wrote at length on this topic [e.g., Ingram 1978, 1979] and the issues canvassed at that time will not be discussed at length here. Suffice it to observe that theoretical and empirical evidence was adduced to show that well designed language learning could effect favourable cross-cultural attitude change and that relevant and practical methods towards this goal could be devised. These methods emphasised the use of "community involvement" approaches in which learners were given many opportunities, both formal and informal, to interact with speakers of the target language and to use the target language in the course of social activities, other learning, and in re-conceptualising their experience of their own environment. Fifteen years on, one would note that "community involvement" is able to take on much expanded dimensions by using the vastly improved communications networks (telephone, videoconferencing, e-mail, satellite links, and so on) to enable learners of all ages to interact with speakers and learners of their target languages both in this country and around the world.

The model developed also emphasised the importance of a "cerebration" process, i.e., a process whereby, in a non-threatening and teacher-controlled environment, learners confronted their own reactions in relation to people of the target and other cultures, and externalized their intuitive reactions for deliberate consideration. In such situations, learners could consciously identify and, where necessary, start deliberately to modify their attitudes especially where, for example, negative attitudes were the result of their personality's intuitive attempts to protect itself in the face of difference or culture shock arising from their "community involvement" experiences [cf. Morgan 1993: 70].

The controlled implementation of the model of language teaching developed was applied and evaluated at tertiary level and in adult migrant education (ESL) programmes and was shown to have a significant effect on learners' cross-cultural attitudes. There is need for comparable research focussing on the teaching and learning of languages at Primary School level in Australia. The importance of such research in the Australian context is underlined by the fact that most of the national and State/Territory policies that have been adopted assume that language learning will bring enhanced cultural knowledge and understanding and probably improved cross-cultural attitudes but little if any research (and no large scale research) has been undertaken into the actual effect or into the design of programmes to maximise the favourable effect.

A recent review article [Morgan 1993] supports the importance that many people now give to cross-cultural attitude change as an essential goal for language learning and points to some of the methodological implications that have just been suggested. In her *Language Teaching* review article, Morgan reviewed largely British and American literature going back as early as 1932 though much of the research considered came from outside language teaching and learning. She notes that "closer contacts" within Europe and internationally and the emergence of multicultural societies makes it "urgent" to consider the issue of improved cultural understanding and cross-cultural attitudes. She cites the National Curriculum in Britain where aims are said to include:

> *to offer insights into the culture and civilisation of the countries where the language is spoken...to encourage positive attitudes to foreign language learning and to speakers of foreign languages and a sympathetic attitude to other cultures and civilisations.* [Secretary of State 1990: 3 cited in Morgan 1993: 63]

She draws attention to the fact that focussing directly on and discussing attitudes is more likely to lead to positive changes but she also warns that drawing students' attention to cultural problems may heighten their anxiety levels, and, by implications, the erection of defensive barriers. She also notes that the "atmosphere" of a classroom where the teacher has tried, with posters and other realia to re-create the atmosphere of the target culture brings beneficial effects but she does not take the implications of this further to emphasise the importance of "community involvement" as a means of ensuring learners actually experience that culture and atmosphere in interaction with native speakers in their home or work environment [Ingram 1978, 1979]. Morgan reviews research on the effect of "externalising" issues for discussion, issues such as

the nature of the learners' reactions and attitudes, and she notes that longer term change is more likely to occur where affective reactions are complemented by cognitive processing (i.e., where learners identify and talk about their experiences and attitudes), than where there is no attempt to involve "cognitive processing" or, as the present writer termed it, "cerebration" [e.g., Ingram 1978]. In reviewing factors that make favourable attitude change more likely to occur, Morgan concludes:

> *What is clear..is that attitude change does not operate in isolation. In order for change to take place, some basic re-structuring on a cognitive level with probable shifts in affectivity must occur.* [Morgan 1993: 72]

Morgan also noted research that showed that role play, in which learners played the role of people in the target culture, was effective in having learners understand the other culture and develop more favourable attitudes towards members of the other culture. It was important, however, that that role play be conducted in a non-threatening manner and this may lend support to the view that community involvement in which learners interact with native speakers or their surrogates in real-life or realistic situations is most likely to be effective in fostering favourable cross-cultural attitude development when it is accompanied by considerable support from the teacher in preparing for the experience and, subsequently, in talking about and coming to understand what has occurred and their own reactions to it. Morgan concludes:

> *If some affective bond can be established within a language context between teacher or pupil or between people from different cultures...then it seems likely that the necessary cognitive and affective changes will arrange themselves.* [Morgan 1993: 68]

Morgan also cites research which endorses another issue noted in passing earlier that is relevant to the development of methodology aimed at fostering both language proficiency and favourable cross-cultural attitude change: a language course should enable learners to re-conceptualise their prior experience through the new language, as a result of, for example, field trips and other activities which allow them to talk about their home environment in the target language [cf. Ingram 1978 and 1979]. This goal of re-conceptualisation is also assisted by having learners interact with native speakers (or native speaker surrogates) in the learners' own community, talk with them about their everyday experiences, listen to such things as the news and other programmes in the target language on Radio Australia and the Special Broadcasting Service, or read "ethnic newspapers" that discuss the same issues as they have read or heard about in the English-based press and media. Immersion and partial immersion programmes would also seem to serve this purpose. The same aim can also be served in the Primary School context by having learners interact with their native speaker peers in the course of normal school activities whether the other children are from their own school or from nearby "ethnic schools". Reviewing the research, Morgan concludes:

> *Viewing the mother-culture through the eyes of the target culture can also be an enlightening experience... [leading to attitude change].*[Morgan 1993: 72]

An article in the *Education Review* of *The Washington Post* in April 1994 highlighted other aspects of this issue [Etzioni 1994]. First, the article cited a teaching experiment that demonstrated how damaging the sort of discriminatory language quoted at the start of this paper can be, especially if it is accompanied by actual acts of discrimination. It also showed how effective role-play and actual interactive experience may be in challenging and changing attitudes and underlined how important it is that such experiences take place in a controlled environment in which the teacher is able to help the children understand their experience:

> *In 1968, Jane Elliott, a third grade teacher in Iowa, was trying to impart to her class a notion of the evils of discrimination. The class did not quite understand what she was discussing. She tried what she thought was going to be merely an educational game. She divided her class into two groups according to eye color and declared that brown-eyed people were unequivocally smarter, cleaner and more civilized than those with blue eyes. Blue-eyed children had to sit in the back of the class, were not allowed to use the water fountain and were not to speak unless spoken to. The game was to continue for two days, but Elliott felt she had to cut it short. "By the lunch hour," she recalled, "there was no need to think before identifying a child as blue- or brown-eyed. I could tell simply by looking at them. The brown-eyed children were happy, alert. The blue-eyed children were miserable. At this point, the class was ready to be told: Now you know what it feels like to be discriminated against."* [Etzioni 1994: 36].

The same article draws attention to a growing trend in the United States to consider character formation as an issue of relevance to the schools. What is discussed is very relevant to the notion of second language learning as personality development [Ingram 1978, 1979]. The article defines "character formation" as being

> *primarily concern[ed with] the development of a set of psychological traits that in turn enable young people to commit to values and abide by them.* [Etzioni 1994: 36]

It emphasises that "people of character are not enslaved by temptation" but can consciously decide what is right from what is wrong and so can exert self-discipline. Such self-discipline may be developed in a variety of ways but it is useful to note that the long-term and quite assiduous nature of language learning in itself requires and probably serves to develop self-discipline but, more pertinently to the present discussion, it again emphasises the value of learners' externalising their reactions and attitudes for consideration or "cerebration" so that they learn that they can compare their intuitive reactions with more desirable values and modify their own behaviour towards the more desirable.

In summary, language teaching aimed at effecting favourable cross-cultural attitude change should centre around interaction with speakers of the target language (or their fluent and enculturated surrogates) both to maximise language proficiency development and cultural knowledge and to foster favourable cross-cultural attitudes. It should include opportunities for learners to re-conceptualise their knowledge and personal experiences through the target language and it should also include many opportunities to consider and discuss issues related to cross-cultural attitudes.

Quality of Teaching and Teachers: Research being carried out at the (NLLIA) Language Testing and Curriculum Centre at Griffith University in the context of an ILOTES project on LOTE enrichment programmes has shown that there is some excellent Primary School language teaching going on using syllabus designs and methods (including immersion and partial immersion) that effectively generate good levels of language proficiency, enthusiastic learners, good and natural cultural understanding, and probably favourable cross-cultural attitudes. However, this project has focussed on the best examples of Primary School language teaching that could be found and it remains the case that there is a lack of extensive materials for Primary School aged children in all the languages, especially the priority Asian languages. Most of all, there is an acute lack of Primary School teachers proficient in the target languages and expert in the methodology of teaching languages to children of Primary School age.

The present writer has argued elsewhere [e.g., Ingram 1992a, 1992b; Ingram and John 1990] that, in order to improve the quality of language teachers, it is necessary to specify the minimum competencies that they require in order to teach effectively. The COAG Report also has laid emphasis on the need to specify language teacher competencies. In broad terms, these minimum skills should include proficiency levels equivalent to at least S:3, L:3, W:3, R:3 on the ASLPR, the sort of pedagogical knowledge and skills obtainable from two semester units of specialist language teaching methodology, and favourable cross-cultural attitudes. These minimum competencies are being spelt out in another ILOTES project on *Minimum competencies for LOTE Teachers* being conducted at the Language Testing and Curriculum Centre at Griffith University and due for completion in early 1995.

Specifying the Needs of Business and Industry: Language curricula would be assisted at all levels if more accurate information were available concerning the actual needs of business and industry and of individual enterprises. To achieve this, research is needed into the conduct of language audits and needs analyses in the Australian context, Australian instruments analogous to the National Language Standards in Britain are required to facilitate the detailed specification of vocational language requirements, and accredited language assessors are required to conduct the needs analyses and language audits.

Community Awareness: If the provision of resources to enable the high quality and large scale language education programme implied by the arguments in this paper (or in the COAG Report) is to be sustained (and sustained throughout the education process), the support of the general public is mandatory. This will require that the public be continually informed of the value of language skills. In fact, the evidence is strong and has been strong for many years that there is a high level of support in the Australian community for language education. Public opinion polling and more limited and focused surveys such as those undertaken by the present writer over the years have all demonstrated this support. Most recently, large scale polling by the Reark organization has again revealed this support. However, if this support is to be sustained, it is critical that the quality and relevance of the programmes developed by academics and teachers, the quality of their teaching, and the quality and relevance of the language and culture skills developed by the learners match the expectations of business, industry and the general public. For this reason, it is essential that the necessary and urgent expansion of language learning envisaged by all national and State/Territory language policies and by the COAG Report proceed no faster than an adequate supply of high quality language teachers will allow.

VI CONCLUSION

This paper has sought to focus on the issue of equity as it affects the everyday lives of individuals in Australia's multicultural society and as it affects Australia's international competitiveness. In the course of writing this paper, I had the misfortune to sit through a church sermon in which the white, middle-class preacher deplored the current focus on individuals' "rights" and "equity". It is very easy for a white, middle-class person protected by his skin-colour and ethnicity from the daily experiences of discrimination encountered by an Aboriginal person or a person whose skin-pigmentation is brown or black or yellow to say there is an over-emphasis on "rights" and "equity". The sorry fact of the matter is that discrimination on no other grounds but a person's difference in skin-colour, language or ethnicity still persists, and still persists in forms that are personally highly destructive. Laws have sought to curb such discrimination but they will be unsuccessful until inter-cultural attitudes are such that the benefits that arise from racial, cultural and linguistic diversity are applauded and acts of discrimination are, for most people, as unthinkable as acts of physical violence. At the international level, Australia will not achieve equity in its competition for world markets until its businesspeople have attitudes conducive to successful marketing in other cultures and through other languages. In achieving these ends and in achieving equity for all Australians and for Australia on the international level, it is the language teachers who have most to contribute. In particular, it is the Primary School language teachers who will contribute most to this process because it is they who have the opportunity to mould attitudes before they become rigid in

adolescence, they have the opportunity through the informal methods that are most appropriate with younger children to provide diverse and natural language and culture learning experiences, and it is they, because of the early start that the extension of language learning through the Primary School provides, who have the opportunity to start learners along the long road towards the attainment of high levels of practical language skills, broad and deep cultural understanding, and attitudes favourable to life in a multicultural, multilingual and multiracial society and world.

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